

Leader's Guide – Feb. 16th - Read Revelation 3:7-13

1. Verses 7-9: Christianity has "little power" in our late modern culture as Western society becomes more antagonistic towards institutional religion. What are some ways we as Christians witness to the Gospel amidst our current cultural weakness?

It's easier to give up when we feel weak. But we bear witness to God's power and faithfulness if we remain loyal to Jesus despite the cultural pressures to renounce and recant our faith. While we do not yet experience persecution, we are tempted to capitulate to the cultural values around us to fit in, to secure our lives, and to be at ease. But we bear witness to the Gospel by living out our faith in front of others despite the disadvantages and the cost of being Christian, not lured by wealth, power, comfort, and ease.

2. Verse 10: Keeping Jesus' word of patient endurance means to witnessing to the Gospel by sharing in Jesus' suffering and enduring His suffering. How does our manner of suffering as Christians in Toronto bear witness to the far surpassing worth of Jesus Christ?

Suffering faithfully for Jesus will show to people that Jesus is worth far more than having everything in life--your health, money, beauty, ease, comfort, etc. Suffering reveals what is truly inside a person. Will our manner of suffering show that we are truly just for ourselves and our own comforts? Or will our manner of suffering show that our joy, peace, and satisfaction are in Jesus and are not in things, people, or circumstances?

3. Verse 11: Waiting for Jesus' return bears witness to the Hope that we have in Him. What are people "waiting" for in Toronto, and how do we as Christians "wait" in a faithful manner that bears witness to our hoping in Jesus alone?

People in Toronto are waiting for a breakthrough, a miracle pill, a vaccine, winning the lottery, the next vacation--to cure loneliness, boredom, cancer, disease, poverty, suffering, death. They are expecting the "cure" to come from human ingenuity. But our Christian manner of waiting bears witness that we will suffer in this life, that suffering is inevitable, but that evil and suffering are not the ultimate reality, and that Jesus Christ is returning to "cure" our world of evil and suffering. Our manner of waiting is not pie-in-the-sky naivete or nihilistic despair. Our manner of waiting acknowledges human suffering and evil, but also hopes in the God who will soon transform all things.

4. Verses 12-13: Jesus promises to make faithful witnesses of His Gospel into pillars in God's Temple, and to give them the names of God, of the New Jerusalem, and of His own new name. How does the promises of permanence and prominence in God's presence (pillar) and the three-fold perfection of our being (the three new names) transform the way you handle weakness, suffering, and patient endurance and waiting in our lives in Toronto?

These promises can make our earthly suffering bearable but also filled with meaning and purpose. Our suffering at least has purpose: the purpose to bear witness and share in Jesus' travail. While not all suffering can be interpreted as having clear meaning and purpose, suffering is opportunity to bear witness to the Gospel. These promises of Jesus assures us that there is

reward in our earthly witness even as we suffer to witness. Jesus is just and fair, and He will reward those who faithfully laboured for the Gospel.